

505 regular sailings of British, German, Finnish, and Scandinavian lines. Of these may be mentioned the United Baltic Corporation, which maintains weekly services between London and Memel, Riga, and Tallinn.

504 The ports of Riga and Tallinn are blocked by ice in the winter months, especially February and March, but in each case channels for steamers are kept open by ice-breakers. While Latvia's trade is thus subject to disorganization, Liepāja and Ventspils are generally free of ice and consequently do a considerable trade in the winter, although accommodation in the ports is limited. Moreover, plans are at present being considered for the further development of a river harbour on the Lielupe at Jelgava. On the other hand, congestion in Tallinn can be relieved only by the use of the small ports of Narva-Jõesuu, Pärnu, and Paldiski. Memel also is blocked by ice in winter, though an ice-breaker is used. Communication can, however, be maintained through the Latvian port of Liepāja. It may be mentioned that for some years the Lithuanian Government has been attempting to develop a small fishing village, Svventoji, near the Latvian frontier, with a view to providing an alternative port to Memel, though progress in this direction has not so far been great.

(2) River Navigation

133 Estonia has few navigable waterways, the Narva, which connects
487 Lake Peipus with the sea, being perhaps the most important. Both Latvia and Lithuania, however, possess rivers which are indispensable for the moving of timber. The principal navigable rivers in Latvia are the Daugava, the Gauga, and the Lielupe; in Lithuania, the Niemen (Nemunas). A canal joins the Niemen to the Bobr, which flows into the Narew, a tributary of the Vistula. The canal is, however, in Polish territory. The Berzune, a tributary of the Niemen, is also joined to the Daugava by a canal. Finally, it should be remembered that most, if not all, of the inland waterways of these countries are closed by ice for three to four months of the year.

(3) Railways

496 As already mentioned, the railway system inherited from Russia bore little relation to the new national requirements. For example, Russia had no object in linking Memel to Kovno, since Memel was in Germany, and Russia had built Libau expressly to be independent of German communications. Moreover, many of the lines were built (or not built) for purely strategic reasons, and nearly all were of the broad Russian gauge. It was natural, too, that they tended to radiate from centres in Russia with which, as has been seen, the Baltic States were to trade far less than before the War. Finally, the War had led to the wholesale destruction of stations, bridges, and other buildings, and even to the removal of locomotives and rolling-stock. Thus, the problems with which the new States were faced were considerable.

● 499 Reconstruction began soon after the War. In almost every case the
727 railways were taken over by the State. The amount of repairs which

had to be undertaken, both to the permanent way and to rolling-stock, 499 ●
 was large. In some instances it was necessary to lay fresh lines, and 727
 where funds could be obtained this was done. By 1930 considerable
 progress had been made, though the state of the permanent way is often
 so bad that the times taken even by fast trains over easy ground is
 comparatively slow.

In August 1924 a railway conference between Estonia, Latvia, and 648
 the U.S.S.R. resulted in the decision to unify the existing separate rail- 496
 way conventions on the basis of the International Convention of Berne,
 and in the signature of nine technical conventions. On October 29, 1925,
 a convention relating to railway transit traffic was concluded by the
 same three Powers.¹

In Estonia on April 1, 1936, there were 891 miles of railway, of which 496
 473 miles were broad gauge, and 418 miles narrow gauge. As much as 727
 254 miles of railway had been constructed since the War. A consider-
 able saving in the running of the railways is now effected by the burning
 of shale-oil.

In Latvia the post-War difficulties were complicated by the fact that
 during the German occupation most of the permanent way had been
 converted to normal or narrow gauge; whereas, if Latvia were to recover
 her transit trade with Russia, many of the lines would have to be recon-
 verted to Russian gauge. In April 1936 there were 2,023 miles in use,
 1,214 miles being of the broad gauge and 198 miles of the normal gauge,
 the latter relating chiefly to the lines connecting Latvia with Central
 Europe. In recent years there has been a considerable amount of fresh
 construction,² though none of the lines completed appears to be of
 outstanding importance.

Lithuania's difficulties were fully as serious as those of Latvia, for
 Lithuania also had been occupied by the German forces. Moreover, the
 existing network of railways was far less suited to the requirements of
 the new State than in the other two cases. The most important of these [499]
 deficiencies, however, was eliminated by the completion, in 1932, of the
 only really important piece of fresh construction in the Baltic States
 since the War, the Siauliai-Telsiai-Kretinga Railway.³ At the end of
 1934 there were 1,152 miles of railway in existence, of which 797 miles
 were broad gauge.

The comparative position of the three countries can be seen from the
 following table:

	Square miles of total territory per mile of railway in use	Millions of ton-kilo- metres of goods carried by railways in 1936
Estonia . . .	21	225
Latvia . . .	13	380*
Lithuania . . .	19	280

* Excluding transit traffic in foreign trains.

¹ For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. lxvi, p. 147.

² Details are given in D.O.T.: *Economic Conditions in Latvia, January 1935*, publ. 1935,
 pp. 33-4.

³ For the importance of this railway, see p. 101.

496 The main line linking the Baltic States to Central Europe is that running from Berlin to Tallinn via Poznan, Tilsit, Siauliai, and Riga. The other important line running north and east, from Warsaw to Leningrad via Grodno and Vilna, is of little real importance to these States, though it passes through Latvian territory via Daugavpils. Connexions with Russia, on the other hand, are good. There are important lines connecting Leningrad with Tallinn and Riga, Moscow with Liepāja via Jelgava, with a branch to Riga, and southern Russia with Liepāja via Minsk, Vilna, and Kaunas, with a branch to Königsberg via Kaunas. In general Latvia has, perhaps, the most extensive system, followed by Estonia, while that of Lithuania is poor. Kaunas, in particular, is badly served for a capital city, and Siauliai would seem to be the railway centre of the country.

(4) Roads

491 In general the road system taken over from the Russian Empire was, like the railways, poor; and had also been greatly affected by the War. For several months of the year the roads are under snow and, even after the snows have gone, suffer from the effects of the thawing. Much progress has, however, been made since the War in improving the conditions of the metalled road system and in constructing fresh metalled roads. In Estonia, for example, the State has taken over completely the maintenance of the principal roads and has set up a Road Fund for this purpose, its revenue coming from subsidies and certain specific taxes.¹ At the same time the development of motor transport is hindered by the fact that both the vehicles and the fuel must be imported, though Estonia, it is true, can eventually use whale-oil as a substitute for petroleum. In recent years the import of vehicles has been much encouraged by a lowering of import duties in Estonia and Lithuania. The total number of motor vehicles in 1936 was as follows:

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Cars	2,580	2,512	1,338
Lorries	1,620	1,963	387
Omnibuses	245	267	282
Motor-cycles	1,401	2,193	1,116

(5) Aviation

509 No regular passenger or postal services are maintained by these countries. Regular services to the three capital cities are maintained during most of the year by German (*Lufthansa*), Finnish (*Aero O.Y.*), or Polish (*Lot*) lines. Thus Tallinn is connected with Helsinki and Leningrad, while a Polish line maintains a service from Warsaw, and a German line a service from Berlin, to Tallinn and Riga. The German line halts at Kaunas. All three countries were included in the arrangements made by the British General Post Office in the summer of 1937 for the introduction of air mail services from the United Kingdom.

¹ See D.O.T.: *Economic Conditions in Estonia, December 1935*, publ. 1936, p. 25.